

# The Baptist Record

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 3  
Thursday, June 21, 1984

## BTN adds state churches

NASHVILLE—Five Baptist groups in Mississippi made commitments recently to participate in BTN (Baptist Telecommunication Network), sponsored by the Sunday School Board as a teaching and training network for churches.

BTN, a denominational network which will carry teaching and training programs from several Southern Baptist agencies, including the Home and Foreign Mission Boards, transmitted the first program June 12 from the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City.

The Mississippi churches which have been added to the BTN network are First Baptist Church, Columbia; and ACTS Board of Laurel, c/o First Baptist Church, Laurel. The other groups include Hinds Madison Association, Jackson; Lauderdale Association, Meridian, and the Mississippi Baptist Convention, Jackson.

Four Mississippi churches, two associations, and the Mississippi Baptist Convention are now part of the almost 150 BTN affiliates in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The full telecast schedule will begin Monday, July 2, with a 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (CDT) schedule, Monday through Friday.

## SBC elects new officers

Charles Stanley, pastor of First Church, Atlanta, and a leader of the fundamentalist faction within the Southern Baptist Convention, was elected president of the 14.1 million member denomination on the first ballot.

Drawing 52 percent of the vote (7,692), Stanley outdistanced both Grady Cothen, former president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, and John Sullivan, pastor of Broadmoor Church, Shreveport. Cothen collected 26 percent of the votes (3,874), while Sullivan, who served as vice president of the SBC for the past two years, drew 22 percent (3,174).

Stanley was nominated by Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Church, Jacksonville.

Zig Ziglar, a motivational speaker from Dallas, and a Yazoo City native, was elected first vice-president of the SBC. He won a runoff election with Donald Wideman, pastor of First Church, North Kansas City, and local arrangements chairman for the 1984 SBC. Ziglar drew 2,920 votes; Wideman, 2,070.

Other nominees for first vice president were Russell Bennett, director of missions, Long Run Association, Louisville, Ky.; and Fred Roach, a homebuilder from Richardson, Tex. Wideman was elected second vice-president from a field of five.

For the first time in recent years, a challenger was presented against Martin Bradley of Nashville as recording secretary. Pamela Adamson of Georgia drew 3,061 votes against Bradley's 7,357.

And Lee Porter of Nashville was re-elected registration secretary.

## SBC, Kansas City

# Messengers elect Stanley, oppose women's ordination

By Tim Nicholas

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Kansas City refused to tie leadership qualifications to Cooperative Program participation during sessions that saw a pastor elected president whose church gave 2.1 percent to the Southern Baptist unified budget plan last year.

In other business the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs nearly lost its SBC funding; and messengers resolved in favor of equal access legislation, against secular humanism, against abortion, and made their strongest statement ever in convention concerning their opposition to women's ordination.

And a report of a committee to study the relationship of Canadian Baptists to Southern Baptists was approved without discussion. The committee said Canadians should not be seated as messengers to the SBC, but that ministry and evangelism in Canada should be among SBC priorities.

Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, was elected president on a first ballot, defeating two-time SBC first vice president John Sullivan, pastor of Shreveport's Broadmoor Baptist Church, and Grady Cothen, recently retired president of the Baptist Sunday School Board. Stanley received 7,692 votes, or 52.18 percent of those cast; Sullivan, 3,174 votes; and Cothen, 3,874 votes.

The first Cooperative Program/leadership business came during the first miscellaneous business session when Don Gillis of Ohio requested "that each nominee for president or vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention state publicly

to this convention the actual percentage being given in relationship to undesignated giving by the church through the Cooperative Program and associational missions where the nominee is a member." Messengers affirmed the request by vote and John Sullivan, presiding noted the request was not binding.

Later, during proceedings, President Jimmy Draper, completing two one year terms, noted that the earlier vote was out of order.

During nomination speeches, nominators of Sullivan and Cothen gave Cooperative Program statistics for their churches of 26 percent and eight percent, respectively. Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Church, Jacksonville, Fla., who nominated Stanley, said only that Stanley's church gave \$640,000 to missions. Stanley later confirmed in a press conference that First Church, Atlanta, gave 2.1 percent to the Cooperative Program last year.

### "Support CP"

In a dramatic presentation, R. S. Crowder, a layman from Birmingham, made a pitch to amend bylaws and the constitution to require the nominating speeches for president include Cooperative Program giving for the past two years, and that lists of appointments or nominations (to boards and agencies) include Cooperative Program giving statistics of nominees' churches, and that the constitution be amended to say that "While recognizing that the Convention has no authority over any other Baptist body, all those persons authorized to make appointments and/or nominations to positions of leadership in the Convention and/or any of its agencies, shall recognize the principle that leaders of the Convention should come from churches which support the Cooperative Program with a minimum of 6 percent of the church's total receipts (ideally, this should be a minimum of 10 percent)."

Crowder, who had made an appearance at a meeting of the SBC Executive Committee last year and at the SBC last year, dramatized his plea by placing a placard around his neck which said "Support CP." Spirited debate followed Crowder's first motion which concerned appointment lists. Bill Harrell of Georgia, who stated he was a member of the credentials committee, said the "issue is not money, but the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church." He was

against the motions. A motion to refer failed. Then Charles Wade of Texas, speaking for the motion, said that messengers want to know if leaders will support the mission program of the convention. He said that those whose churches give two percent "aren't going to make decisions about how we are going to sacrificially give" to missions, said Wade. He added that "the Convention must have the wisdom to protect itself . . . or we don't have a future."

Another messenger speaking against said that people aren't to buy a place on a board and that giving to the Cooperative Program is "because we love God" rather than having to give so much to the Convention. Another speaking for said that those who are chosen to lead should lead by example.

Then Wayne Allen of Memphis noted the motion should have been written to reflect undesignated giving rather than total gifts because some churches with special ministries such as television or building programs may have inflated total receipts, knocking the percentage figures askew. After that statement the vote was taken and the motion lost, as did the part concerning election of officers. However, the constitutional change concerning minimum giving expected was referred to the Executive Committee.

The Cooperative Program itself in budget form for 1985 at \$130 million, was passed without dissent after a motion failed that would have pulled out funding for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

That agency, one third of whose trustees are chosen by the SBC to join with trustees of eight other Baptist bodies, exists to inform Baptists of government business that affects church business, and to intervene in such cases. Led by James Dunn, the agency, based in Washington, has come under fire in recent years by conservatives who want the agency to support government sponsored bills to hold voluntary, group prayers in public schools.

Threats to withdraw funding came to a head when Ed Drake of First Baptist Church, Dallas, and an SBC Executive Committee member, moved to set aside the \$411,000 the BJCPA receives to be reallocated later following a possible move to begin a Southern Baptist-only public affairs agency.

Porter Routh, from First Baptist Church, Nashville, and a former executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee spoke for the

original budget motion (which would have included the BJCPA). A number spoke for and against the full budget motion including Gary Crum of Washington; Jimmy Jackson of Huntsville, Ala., and an Executive Committee member; and Adrian Rogers, of Bellevue Church, Memphis, and former SBC president, all of whom wanted the BJCPA defunded. Hugh Wamble of Kansas City; Paul Pridgen of Aiken, S.C.; and Henry Green of Jacksonville, Fla., spoke in favor of the original budget motion which included the BJCPA.

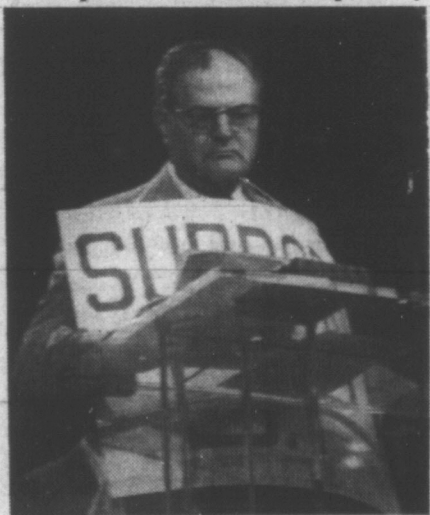
A ballot vote barely gave the agency the edge with 5,854 voting against the amendment budget and 5,480 voting for it.

Passage of ten resolutions out of 30 submitted to the resolutions committee, took place following a request by Draper with messenger assent that all discussion of resolutions take only eight minutes each. After resolutions favoring worldwide evangelism and opposing a U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican passed easily, the committee presented the strongest statement ever before the SBC concerning opposition to women's ordination. The statement resolved "That we not decide concerns of Christian doctrine and practice by modern cultural, sociological and ecclesiastical trends or by emotional factors; that we remind ourselves of the dearly bought Baptist principle of the final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and conduct; and that we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination."

(Continued on page 9)



Lewis Drummond, Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism at Southern Seminary, gave a series of interpretations of the 1984 SBC theme "If my people . . . I will . . ."—Warren Johnson photo.



R.S. Crowder, a layman from Birmingham, dramatizes his feeling that SBC leaders should offer at least a minimum of Cooperative Program support.—Tim Nicholas photo.



## Women hear challenge

# 'Continue new missions ventures'

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—More than 2,500 women were challenged at the annual meeting of Woman's Missionary Union to continue as the "missions conscience of Southern Baptists" and to attempt missions ventures never tried before.

Foreign and home missionaries and leaders of Southern Baptist Convention mission boards issued stirring challenges backed by flags of the 103 nations where Southern Baptists have missionaries.

WMU leads the almost 37,000 Southern Baptists churches in supporting missions through prayer, mission study and special offerings.

The women unanimously elected Dorothy E. Sample of Flint, Mich., to a fourth consecutive term as their president and Betty Gilreath of Charlotte, N.C., to a similar term as a recording secretary.

Mrs. Sample sized up the Convention theme, "Laborers Together," when she said, "We must do things we've never done before, think thoughts we've never thought before, even fail in ventures we've never attempted before."

"For together we have the potential to transform hopelessness into hope, problems into promise, despair into discovery and liberty into true freedom found only in Jesus Christ."

Southern Baptist missions leaders called WMU "the missions conscience of Southern Baptists and challenged them to help reverse an "erosion" in missions support.

R. Keith Parks, president of the Richmond-based Foreign Mission Board, expressed concern that the Lottie Moon Offering for foreign missions provides more foreign missions support than the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' main method of undergirding missions work.

"Throughout the Convention an erosion has taken place in Cooperative Program giving," Parks said. "Except for what you're doing, we'd have to reduce by more than 40 percent what is happening in world missions."

Southern Baptists have about 3,400 foreign missionaries and about 3,792 home missionaries supported through the Cooperative Program and special offerings.

Parks said Southern Baptists have given a total of \$654 million for foreign missions through the Lottie Moon Offering. The 1983-84 foreign missions offering of \$58 million was \$4 million greater than the previous year but short of the goal by about \$2 million.

William G. Tanner, president of the Atlanta-based Home Mission Board, told the women that the annual Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions is "making the difference in the United States."

"But just the offering is not enough. We must have a distinct week of prayer and home missions study."

Carolyn Weatherford, executive director of WMU, reminded the women that the WMU executive committee voted three days earlier

to reduce the Lottie Moon offering goal from \$72 to \$70 million in 1983 and to set a \$75 million goal for the 1986 offering.

The goal for the 1985 Annie Armstrong offering has been reduced from \$32 million to \$30 million.

Prayer was the overriding emphasis of missionaries during the three-day convention. More than 300 women opened the meeting with a prayer conference.

The prayer conference emphasized the need of prayer to strengthen the partnership and support of the local church, association, state convention and denomination.

"It is not possible to dissect local, associational, state, home and foreign missions," said William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas. "We cannot do one without doing all."

Prayer conference participants were asked to consider changes in society and their effect on mission work.

"With the increasing percentage of women working outside the home there is a decreasing number of women to serve in weekday mission activities in the church," said Nelson Duke of Jefferson City, Mo.

"It is imperative that the responsibilities of mission be shared by more women and the church as a whole."

James Griffith, executive director for the executive committee of Georgia Baptists, and Dorothy Pryor, executive director of the Georgia WMU, both of Atlanta, emphasized the role of the women in prayer and financial support of partnership missions.

Griffith said that if WMU continues its commitment and dedicated service, Bold Mission Thrust (Southern Baptists' goal to reach every person on earth with the gospel by the year 2000) may just become a reality."

James F. Kirkendall, pastor of International Baptist Church, Brussels, Belgium, urged Baptists to pray for their missionaries, not just on their birthdays but according to what is happening in the countries where they serve.

He recalled that when the report was circulating in 1970 that he was missing in Beirut, Lebanon, many churches prayed for him at their Wednesday night prayer meetings. He reminded that his release came during the time frame of the prayer meetings.

The outgoing Southern Baptist president, Jimmy Draper of Euless, Texas, urged the women to be bold in mission action, sound in doctrine, cooperative in missions strategy, obedient to Christ and servants of the Lord.

"Southern Baptists have the people, the programs, the personnel, the possessions to make disciples of the whole world," said Draper. "The only blockade to this goal being a reality is our disobedience."

A foreign missionary couple, Thomas and Gloria Thurman from Bangladesh, brought the mission



## WMU officers

Pictured are WMU officers. From left are Dorothy Sample, Flint, Mich., president for her fourth term; Carolyn Weatherford, executive director; and Betty Gilreath, Charlotte, N.C., recording secretary.

field into the auditorium with graphic descriptions of a nation where 96 million people live in an area the size of Arkansas.

They described "three cobras dancing to the tune of a bamboo flute, mothers washing their dishes and clothes in the same water in which the family bathed, the vibrant voices of men, women and children as they engage in worship of other gods..."

The missionaries said a terrible famine in the late 1970s caused 400,000 people to starve to death, but at the same time many people began asking to know about "the God of the Christians."

In 1979, the Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship set out to increase their number of churches from 16 to 200 by 1990. By 1982 there were 48 churches, Thurman reported. The Thurmans are Mississippians.

"It appears that our first task in 1990 will be to have a prayer meeting of confession... a prayer of forgiveness in asking for so few churches," he said.

A special emphasis on prayer was led by Bettye Anne Lovelady, missionary associate of the Home Mission Board's Black Church Relations Department.

Lovelady, who serves as vice-president for administration at Mississippi Baptist Seminary in Jackson, Miss., called on the women to "spend more time praying about each other, for each other and with each other."

Indy Whitten of Mississippi, foreign missionary to Equatorial Guinea, shared how the Lord has spoken to and through her during her years of service as a missionary on four continents.

"Thirty-seven years ago, my hus-

band and I set forth on this wonderful adventure as foreign missionaries. In many ways I didn't fully realize what all was involved in such a dedication but now at this very moment I offer my life to him once more and say, 'Lord keep on speaking through me' "

## Antioch celebrated centennial

Antioch Church, Jefferson Davis County, observed its centennial anniversary on May 27. John Barnes, III, pastor, delivered the message at the morning service. An old-fashioned dinner on the ground was served to over 200.

In the afternoon service, B. E. Padgett, a former pastor, delivered the response to the welcome. Margaret Carraway Lay, a former member and a recently appointed foreign missionary, presented special music.

Butch Harmon gave a brief history of the church. Antioch Church began May 31, 1884, as a mission church of Ebenezer and Bethany churches. On January 9, 1899, land was donated by the Sinclair family for the present site of the church in the Granby community. The present and only burial ground was selected in 1903. Fifteen different baptismal locations were used until the present baptistry was built inside the church. Antioch is the third oldest church in the Jefferson Davis Association.

E. B. Sinclair, chairman of the Centennial Committee, presided at the roll call of the 44 former pastors. B. E. Padgett, O. H. Petty, and A. E. Allman were present, as well as the current pastor.

Descendants of the 28 charter members and former pastors were recognized. Visitors came from as far as Midland, Tex.

For every 11 church members overseas, national Baptists and Southern Baptist missionaries baptized a new believer last year. That compares to a ratio of one new believer to 36 Southern Baptists in the States.

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# Faces And Places

by anne washburn mcwilliams

## Moonlight is inexpensive

What a nice way to start a day! This morning, Friday, June 15, I received a note from Linda Jenkins, church secretary at First Church, Yazoo City. She said, "Throughout this year I am choosing at least one person each day to especially thank the Lord for. I remember that person during the day in my thoughts and prayers and then drop them a note. As you may have guessed by now, you are the person I have chosen to remember today. I have prayed for you, and I thank the Lord for you!" What a beautiful idea! (You are a beautiful person, Linda. And I thank you!) It's an idea I'm thinking of copying.

I spent nights last week cleaning out closets and drawers, getting ready for a garage sale. As I tried to write an ad, and later tried to think of a nice sales pitch to describe my items, I began to think, "These are treasures! Why don't I keep them for myself?" That works the same way, I've found, with praising people. The more good things I can say or write about a person, the more I actually begin to appreciate that person. Too, I've noticed that recipients of praise grow and blossom under its light.

**Correction:** For the June 14 issue of the Baptist Record, I wrote an article about Mrs. Mississippi, Mrs. Victor Yawn. In it, I said that her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Brock Crain, are members of Robinson Street Church, Jackson. They were members there formerly, but are now members of Alta Woods Church, Jackson.

For some time I've been collecting odds and ends in a folder titled, "Optimism." For instance, there's a little poem, "Everything's going up!" I don't know the author, but I clipped it from the Van Winkle Church bulletin. One stanza says, "Everything is going up, but bird songs cost no more; no 20 percent for luxury on the jasmine 'round the door; the moonlight in my garden's inexpensive as before...."

And here's a little story about Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale, who is married to one of the world's greatest optimists. She revealed that even her husband sometimes gets into a depressed mood, and when he does, she tries to draw him out of it.

Mrs. Peale was sitting beside a woman on a train, and they began talking. The other woman said that her own husband was a gloomy man and "I just tell him he's getting me down—to shut up!"

"But he needs to talk," Mrs. Peale told her, "and not keep the gloom bottled up. Pretend you are emotional blotting paper. Listen, but let it go in one ear and out the other. Look at him while he is talking and think how much you love him."

(This story about Mrs. Peale was of particular interest to me, because my husband had a depressing experience last week. He's the type who

keeps his worries to himself, but I knew he was extremely upset when—while he was on the reservoir fishing—somebody stole his prized boat trailer.)

Her further advice on keeping a husband cheerful: "Save up optimistic items from your life and from your reading, and share them with him. Don't invite pessimistic people to be your guests. Both of you sit down and write down all the good things you can think of about your life together. For one whole day, try to avoid saying anything critical about anybody. Act cheerful yourself."

Ouch! That last one hurt. First thing I do when I get home is start listing all the bad things that happened to me that day. I save them up to get off my chest the minute I get in the door.

A third item in my "Optimism" folder is a copy of Tal Bonham's column "Growth-A-Gram," in the Ohio Baptist Messenger. (Bonham is executive secretary for Ohio Baptists.) He quotes two contrasting verses. The first presupposes defeat: "It is difficult to soar like an eagle, when you have to work with turkeys." The second (by Calvin Miller) visualizes victory: "Earth holds a strange power that ties feet in the dust, so that ponderous men are bound to her crust, but the Winds whisper tales of a force in the sky, and those with the courage to scorn dust, can fly." Then Bonham goes on to say, "I like that, Calvin! We believers in Christ are a flying people! The earth, if possible, would tie our feet to itself in the dust of circumstances and tempt us to spend our time pondering our plight. But the Holy Spirit whispers, 'For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind' (I Tim. 1:7).

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## Mississippian chosen for singing tour

Jenny Kay Graham of Pascagoula was the only Mississippian chosen to participate in the Baptist Festival Singers 1984 European Tour, Bob Burroughs, conductor. Miss Graham, 21, will join 60 singers and an orchestra of 30, chosen from the United States for a June 16 to July 12 tour of Europe.



Graham

After rehearsals at Winchester, Va., they are appearing in cities throughout Germany, and will sing

for the European Baptist Convention in Interlaken, Switzerland.

In Paris, they will perform a full concert in Notre Dame Cathedral where more than 3,000 people will be present. The young people will also perform throughout Great Britain. The tour will conclude with a concert in Washington, D. C. July 11.

"It is a religious effort, but also an educational program," said Miss Graham, "I will write a paper about my tour and receive college credit."

Miss Graham is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Graham of Pascagoula. A senior at the University of Alabama, she is a major in

corporate finance and investment management and plans to pursue a career as an investment broker.

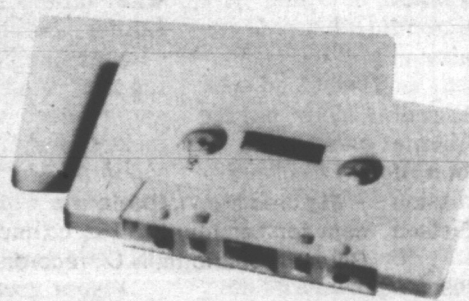
A soprano, she has had five years of voice lessons. She is active in the choir and hand bell programs at First Baptist Church, Pascagoula. She won first place in the 1981 Mississippi Baptist Vocal Festival.

**We must stand tall on our knees. We must be courageous in humility. We must be prophetic in love. We must get on with doing missions, the greatest task God ever entrusted to human beings.—R. Keith Parks**

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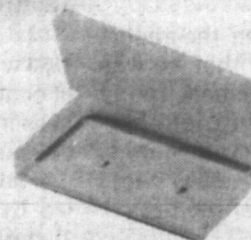
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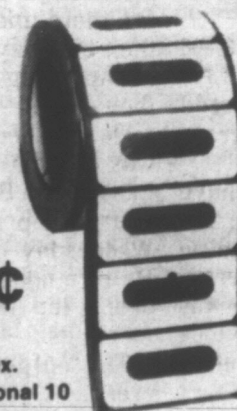


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# Convention Sermon

## On higher ground

By Russell H. Dilday Jr.

Russell H. Dilday, Jr., 53, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, since 1978, is a native of Amarillo, TX. Formerly he served as pastor of four churches—three in Texas, First Baptist, Antelope, First Baptist, Clifton and Tallowood in Houston and one in Georgia; Atlanta, Second Ponce de Leon. His education includes the bachelor of arts (English) from Baylor University, Waco, TX; and the B.D. and doctor of philosophy (religion) from Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, TX.

### INTRODUCTION

The title of the message is taken from a well-known hymn:

Lord, lift me up and let me stand,  
By faith on Heaven's table land,  
A higher plane than I have found,  
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.

The biblical text for the message is Philippians 3:14, "I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus," and Colossians 3:1-2, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."

The Bible repeatedly calls us upward to higher ground, to turn our backs on the petty, the trivial, and the unworthy, and to take instead the high road of uncompromising integrity. We are to stand on higher ground with the One who himself is High and Lifted up.

To every man there openeth A Way, and Ways, and a Way,  
The High Soul climbs the High Way,  
The Low Soul gropes the Low,  
And in between, on the misty flats,  
The rest drift to and fro,  
And every man decideth, The Way his soul shall go.

(John Oxenham)

The challenge of the message to this convention is that we obey the Word of God that calls us to a more excellent way, and redeploy our messengers, our institutions, and our churches to God's table land where they belong.

Our hearts have no desire to stay,  
Where doubts arise and fears dismay,  
Though some may dwell where these abound,

Our prayer, our aim is Higher Ground.

### I. Let's turn from forced uniformity to the higher ground of autonomous individualism

Baptists have stood tall in their courageous defense of individual autonomy. We call it "the priesthood of the believer," "the axiom of soul competency." It's that cherished truth that no one can stand between a person and God except the one mediator, Jesus Christ. No church, no priest, no ordinance, no creed, nothing but Jesus. Our heroes have been those rugged individuals who died for the right to answer to God for themselves and to worship him as they pleased.

We take that concept of individualism from the Bible. Psalms 49:7 says, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him." God created us individually, and each of us is both responsible and free to live his own life. That's why Jesus asked the disciples in Matthew 16:13, not only "Whom do men say that I am?" but "Whom do YOU say that I am?" And one of the clearest verses about individual autonomy is John 18:34, where Jesus confronted Pilate with the question, "Are you speaking for yourself, or did others tell you this?"

But unfortunately, in contradiction to the Bible, there are some among us who, fearful of

standing alone, and determined to get ahead in denominational life, surrender that sacred privilege of individualism. They go along with the crowd, accepting the canned thinking of the majority. Swayed by public opinion, and glibly mouthing the popular clichés of the party in power, they are quick to espouse those causes that are in vogue. They cater to the powerful, play to the gallery, and flow with the tide.

Isn't it a shame to be caught in the grip of a mentality like that? Even if only one person among us believes that "to get recommended to a better church you have to signal your loyalty to the party in power by using certain flag words. If you disagree, you'll be labeled. Be careful who you sit with in the sessions or talk to in the halls. Watch out how they see you vote. You may have a deep conviction about the issue being decided, but you'd better raise your hand with the majority." Even if only one believes that, he is one too many. And over the dying ashes of autonomous individualism who will hear the probing question of Jesus, "Are you speaking for yourself, or did others tell you this?"

But lost individualism is a two-sided coin. One side is the fear of standing alone, but the other side is the refusal to let another person stand alone. In his famous novel, George Orwell painted a grim picture of society in 1984, a society of forced uniformity. Everyone was obliged to mouth the party line or else. Spies listened and reported any diverse unorthodoxy to the Ministry of Truth. Individual disagreement was punished as heresy.

Incredible as it sounds, there is emerging in this denomination built on the principle of rugged individualism, an incipient Orwellian mentality. It threatens to drag us down from the high ground to the low lands of suspicion, rumor, criticism, innuendoes, guilt by association, and the rest of that demonic family of forced uniformity. I shudder when I see a coterie of the orthodox watching to catch a brother in a statement that sounds heretical, carelessly categorizing churches as liberal or fundamentalist, unconcerned about the adverse effect that criticism may have on God's work. But surely this would never happen in our convention, would it?

Three experiences I've had recently lead me to say it might happen here. Last year, a pastor publicly critiqued the book I wrote on Biblical Authority. It was a broadside criticism in which he disagreed vehemently with my position. That's O.K., except for the fact that he obviously misunderstood my position. Much of the criticism was so unjustified that it was obvious: he couldn't have read the book. I called him, he acknowledged that he wrote the criticism without having read the book for himself. I sent him a copy, and we eventually established an open relationship of discussion. But as I reflected on that experience, I couldn't help but remember the question of Jesus, "Are you speaking for yourself or did others tell you this?"

Illustration number two. We had on campus recently a preacher who during our recent controversies, has been very vocal in his defense of the denomination. He preached a powerful evangelistic sermon in chapel that moved our student body and visiting guests. There were rousing "Amens" and spontaneous ovations. After the service, one of our guests said to me, "I was really going to let you have it, Mr. President, for inviting that liberal to preach today, but I was wrong. That was a great message, but do you think he really believes what he preached today?" It was obvi-

ous the guest had let other people shape his opinion of our preacher, and I remembered the scripture, "Are you speaking for yourself or did others tell you this?"

Number three. A few years ago I attended one of those Bible Conferences where criticism was so often leveled at our seminaries. The rhetoric was especially hostile that day. Later, upon discovering I was present, some of those who spoke so strongly, came by to say, "I didn't have you in mind. I'm not really with this crowd; I'm for you." Well the disclaimers may have been sincere, but I couldn't help but remember the biblical admonition in Colossians 3:22, "Serve the Lord with singleness of heart, not with eyeservice as men-pleasers," and the passage: "Are you speaking for yourself or did others tell you this?"

How much better to be a Godly individualist who with open mind listens to all sides of an issue, prayerfully measures those issues by the word of God, and then humbly takes a position and stands courageously by it no matter what others think. How much better, like Luther, facing abuse if necessary, to say, "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise, God helping me." And how much better to allow that same freedom to others without pressing for lock-step uniformity. That's the rugged individualism to which the Bible calls us. And that's the higher ground where we Baptists have stood and where we need to stand today.

### II. Let's turn from political coercion to the higher ground of spiritual persuasion

Jesus made it unmistakably clear by his commands and example that the power we are to employ in our work for him is not political or conscriptive power, but spiritual power. Consistently, Jesus refused to use even subtle coercion in his mission. He rejected the low ground of political force and chose instead the higher ground of spiritual persuasion.

Our Saviour wept over Jerusalem, but he never besieged it, never rallied its legislature or courts to favor his cause, never formed a political coalition to advance his kingdom. He preached, and prayed, and served, and loved, and to the end he steadfastly rejected worldly force. Jesus chose the higher ground of spiritual persuasion.

Heaven's entire angelic army was at his command. With the snap of a finger, he could have brought Herod and Pilate to their knees in surrender and enthroned himself as King in Jerusalem. But he didn't. John 6:15 says, "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself." He came not to be an autocrat, but a servant leader.

John 9:54 says that even though James and John thought it was a great idea, Jesus would not call down fire from heaven on those who disagreed with him. Respecting that fragile treasure of free will, Jesus refused to manipulate, coerce, or commandeer the people. He chose persuasion, reason, and love as his weapons. He who could wither a fig tree with a spoken rebuke, and with one word de-fang a howling windstorm into a whimpering breeze, would not force his will on others. Jesus could have pulled the trigger of his power and with one divine laser blast vaporized the ones who nailed him to the cross, but instead he prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

In Matthew 26:52 Simon Peter drew his weapon in the garden, and Jesus rebuked him, "Put your sword back into its place, for all who take up the sword will perish by the sword." We can learn from that verse, for it may seem

appropriate at times for us to enlist the civil powers of the state in our witness for Christ. But beware, that's the low road to the misty swamps, not the way to God's higher ground.

Go ahead. Engage the government as your ally. Since you're a major political force today, and hold the power to influence Congress, breach the wall of separation and bend the guarantees of religious liberty a little bit so that your faith enjoys the support of the state. If the sword of federal support is offered, grasp it and use it. But remember, our Lord said, "They that live by the sword shall die by the sword."

Call on Big Brother in Washington to help you witness and worship, and Big Brother will trivialize your Lord, sanctioning his sacred birth as nothing more than a folk festival, giving Bethlehem's manger no more significance than Rudolph's red nose. Ask the Supreme Court to endorse your Christian faith, and they will relegate the virgin-born Jesus, the only begotten of the Father, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, they will relegate him to the company of Santa Claus, Frosty the Snowman, and Alvin the caroling chipmunk.

Better to have enemies who know who Christ is and detest him, than political friends in high places who classify the eternal incarnation with fairy tale symbols of godless folklore.

No wonder Jesus said to Simon, the would-be words-man, "Stop! No more of this! I need no political allies. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once put at my disposal more than 12 legions of angels? But I would not stoop to coercive arm twisting. Put away your sword; for all who take up the sword shall perish by the sword."

Some day in the future, as so often in the past, other political forces, hostile to religious liberty, will hold the advantage. They will have the political clout you have today, and they may breach that crack you so casually made in the wall of separation, and circumvent the guarantees you brazenly bent a little bit, and they may steal away the liberty you carelessly abused. And future generations of Americans will look back on our twentieth century and wonder what happened to that country which a Baptist musician described as "sweet land of liberty."

Have you ever studied the sad experience of Baptists in Germany during Hitler's rise to power? We who've never lived under a repressive regime like the Third Reich should be slow to condemn, but the lessons of their failure are so timely. Church historian Stephen Brachlow has a disturbing study you ought to read.

German Baptists rightly concerned about immorality in their country in the 1930's rallied behind Hitler's drive to rid society of pornography, prostitution, homosexuality, and other social sins. Decided by the Orwellian doublespeak of Nazi propaganda, and impressed with Hitler's righteous campaign against degenerates, and his pious commitment to what he called "positive Christianity," German Baptists temporarily lost sight of their traditional antipathy toward establishment religion. They developed alliances with the government and received unprecedented privileges while other religious groups were being persecuted. As one Baptist leader put it, "the German Finance Ministry favored Baptist churches in tax matters and the Secret Police were uninterruptedly friendly." For the first time in 100 years German Baptists enjoyed the paternal care of their government. In contrast to their forebears who had struggled as a persecuted minority, they were now the privileged ones.



# On higher ground

(Continued from page 6)

They dismissed the government restrictions placed on Lutheran and Evangelical congregations as divine judgment for the years they had harassed Baptist churches. So long as they remained unmolested by the authorities, these Baptists shrank from endangering their own privileged freedom by challenging the state. And they discovered too late that they were duped.

The lesson is clear. Individual Baptists should be involved as Christian citizens at every level of our democratic processes of government, but only to insure that personal freedom and justice are maintained, never to secure privileged support from the state nor encourage its entanglement in religious affairs. We must never give up our historic concern for religious liberty. Even when we find ourselves in positions of prominence and in league with the powerful, we must not fail to protect the freedom of the minorities who differ from us.

Oh twentieth century Baptists, where is your distinctive biblical message: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's"? Where is your voice so consistently raised in past days for religious liberty? Where is your ancient conviction that it is "not by might nor by power, but by God's spirit" that we conquer? We should put away the sword of government alliance and political clout, and reclaim instead our historical Baptist legacy of separation of church and state. We must choose, as Jesus did, to employ only spiritual weapons. For Baptists stand tallest when we look not to a benevolent uncle in Washington, but to an omnipotent father in Heaven. Let's turn from political coercion to the higher ground of spiritual persuasion.

## III. Let's turn from egotistic self-interest to the higher ground of Christ-like humility

Who can forget that embarrassing incident in Mark 10:37 when James and John asked their special favor of Jesus. He had just predicted in graphic detail how he would soon be crucified, how they would mock him, scourge him, spit on him, and kill him. And do you remember how James and John responded to that solemn prediction? They said to Jesus, "Grant us that we may sit, one on your right hand and the other on your left in your glory." Incredible! In fact, it seems Jesus was always catching the disciples at each other's throats about who was the greatest. No wonder the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write in Philippians 2:3-7:

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem another better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking

the form of a servant...

The moment we imitate James and John in looking for personal advancement, or the moment we imitate the Pharisees in seeking the chief seats, in that moment we are bogged down in the muddy flats of egotistic self-interest. But the moment we imitate Jesus, let his lowliness of mind be our example, in that moment we climb to the higher ground of Christ-like humility.

Weren't you shocked to read that the U.S. government, following the military rescue mission in Grenada, awarded 8614 decorations for bravery in action? We were shocked because only 7000 troops were involved in the fighting. Many of the medals for bravery under fire went to bureaucrats in the Pentagon or Fort Bragg who sat behind desks and were never in danger. We really know how to congratulate ourselves, don't we? Somebody said God created us with our arms out in front to make it almost impossible to pat ourselves on the back, but we learned to do it anyway. We're experts at giving ourselves medals, promoting our own careers, and looking out for number one.

I had lunch a while back with a famous television evangelist who is often introduced as "The next Billy Graham." His secretary called to ask if I would please arrange for a private room. She said the evangelist was so well-known that he could never eat in a public restaurant. His fans would mob him and interrupt his meal. Well, it sounded a little presumptuous, but I followed her suggestion for privacy.

However, I couldn't help but remember my moment of glory a few years ago in Atlanta when I entertained the REAL Billy Graham. The crusade committee asked me to arrange a golf game and a luncheon one Monday. I was really excited. The best clubs were closed on Mondays, so I pulled strings and enlisted the famous golf pro at the Atlanta Country Club to open his course just for Dr. Graham and our foursome. Then I set up an elegant luncheon in one of Atlanta's best restaurants.

But when I called Dr. Graham to tell him my plans, do you know what HE asked me to arrange? After hearing my suggestions, he thanked me, but humbly asked if we might make some changes. He would rather play at a public golf course and eat at a cafeteria near the hotel. I couldn't believe it.

When I picked him up, Dr. Graham had on an old golf cap and dark sun glasses, we played on the sorriest golf course in Atlanta, right under the flight path of the Airport. Then, believe it or not, we pushed our trays through the line at Morrison's Cafeteria for lunch. There I was fighting an irresistible urge to point to this man in golf cap and sun glasses to say to everybody, "Do you know who this is? Do you know who I'm with?" No one recognized him until half-way through the meal, and he greeted that one nervous intruder graciously and kindly. The contrast between the two men was startling. One walked in the misty flats of

self interest, the other walked on higher ground.

What do you think Jesus, who rebuked James and John for their petty self-promotion, would say about our blatant scramble for denominational chief seats today? It sounds so much like the egotistic self-interest of the Sons of Thunder, doesn't it? "We've been left out, it's our turn to be elected, put us on the boards and committees, give us the positions." When proud brokers of power manipulate the democratic processes of this convention in order to promote themselves, they've slipped from the high ground to the misty swamps of selfish ambition and conceit. And the Bible says, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem another better than himself."

What ever happened to the biblical concept of servant leadership? Lloyd Elder is right when he says we must examine our denominational reward system. We have so glamorized some standards of success that the other standards which are so essential to winning our world to Christ have been overlooked. Dr. Elder said:

Right now the reward system is based not on faithfulness, but largeness and notoriety. You have to make it to the headlines in order to be recognized among the brethren as being faithful in ministry. Super churches are important, but we must begin to recognize the super work being done by untold thousands in smaller congregations.

We don't need "king of the mountain" competition today, we need compassionate cooperation. God didn't put us here to see through each other. He put us here to see each other through. I Peter 5:5-6 says, "All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."

The first chapter of John's Gospel describes the first man to carry the name Baptist. He was the forerunner of Jesus. Jesus called him the greatest man who ever lived. But look again at that first chapter. Every reference to John the Baptist is one of personal depreciation. Verse 8 says: "he was NOT that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light." In verse 15 John the Baptist says of himself, "He who comes after me was before me. He has a higher rank than I have." He claims in verse 27: "He who comes after me is preferred before me. His sandal straps I am not worthy to unlatch."

John's enemies thought it would make him jealous when they told him in Chapter 10 that Jesus was baptizing more people than he was. (What would some of our preachers say if they were told that a neighboring pastor reported more baptisms than they did?) John's response was, "I must decrease; he must increase." In John 1:20 a delegation from Jerusalem asked him, "Who are you?" His

reply: "I am NOT the Christ. I'm not the Prophet, I'm not even Elijah. I am a voice."—literally a PHONO—that's all, a voice.

Asked a compass, "Are you north?" No answer; it just swings its faithful arrow toward the magnetic pole and points. Ask John, "Are you the light?" No answer, he just points to Jesus and says, "Behold the Lamb of God." John made humility a sacred art form. He never filed an IRS tax return, but if he had, his "personal depreciation schedule" would have been a classic!

But isn't it a shame today when a person becomes the focus of his own ministry? When self-promotion, autocratic leadership styles and success goals become our highest priorities? Or worse, isn't it tragic when a church begins to worship its pastor instead of the Lord who called him, focusing on the herald instead of the King. No matter how great your pastor is, he's not the light, he's just a PHONO, just a voice pointing to the true light, announcing the King whose sandals none of us is worthy to unlatch.

Let's reclaim that vanishing quality of humility that was personified by Jesus and lived out so convincingly by John, the first Baptist. Let's turn from egotistic self-interest to the higher ground of Christ-like humility.

## Conclusion

When Nehemiah, the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, was busy obeying God's command to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem, he was tempted to turn from his lofty work to take up lesser pursuits. His response to that temptation is the one I pray Southern Baptists will give. It's in Nehemiah 6:3, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?"

Stay on the heights, Southern Baptists. You're doing a great work. Stay close to the Lord and to the task he has called you to perform. Be faithful to your historic heritage. Don't dabble in controversies or exhaust your energies arm-wrestling for denominational control. This convention is too valuable to let it become a volleyball bounced back and forth across the political net by shrewd game players. Stay on higher ground of spiritual persuasion, autonomous individualism, the Christ-like humility where you belong.

Shakespeare was right, "They that stand high have many blasts to shake them." But when we stand high with Christ those blasts will not be jealous pot-shots we lob at each other; they will be Satan's blasts hurled against a united family of faith. And we won't be afraid, because we'll be with the one who promised to make us more than conquerors. We'll be on higher ground.

So, Southern Baptists, our prayer should be:  
Lord, lift us up and let us stand,  
By faith, on heaven's table land,  
A higher plan than we have found,  
Lord, plant our feet on higher ground.


## Hindus turn to Christ

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (EP)—Hindus in India are turning to Christ at the rate of 6,000 per month, according to reports coming to Bibles for India. The statistics are compiled from missions and churches using the organization's church-planting program. "The number of converts is arrived at by a constant sampling of the results by representatives of Bibles for India, who serve participating churches," President John DeVries told Missionary News Service.

The program is monitored by regional directors, who then post national averages. Last year, Bibles for India distributed three million Scriptures to churches.

## 'Bring your hoe'

MAGURA, Bangladesh—Christian leaders invited to a two-week training camp in Bangladesh recently were told to "Bring your hoe with you." The leaders were breaking ground for vegetables and fruit trees to be planted on property adjacent to Magura Baptist Church. They also studied the Bible and received pastoral training, particularly in administering the ordinances.



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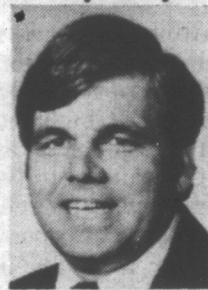


## Devotional Spiritual antihistamines

By Ray Henry, pastor, Society Hill, Oakvale

Submit yourselves then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (James 4:7).

Our very best care and concern for our young son, who had developed a high fever, didn't seem to bring healing. Finally we took him to our physician. He very kindly instructed us about a simple medical principle. When there is an infectious virus present, there has to be given at least an antihistamine to combat the virus or infection. Before our visit to the doctor we were successful in getting the fever down, but the virus remained, and the healing process was extended. Not until we dealt with the infection with antihistamines did our son get well.



Henry

James tells us that our spiritual body, the church, can be attacked by destructive forces of the devil. They are many evil intruders that come against our churches and have left them limp and weak, unable to function. Doubts, divisive spirits, discouragement, fear, envy and jealousy, hatred, and so on are all diseases that seek out a weak cell in the body of Christ to work their havoc.

James tells us to "resist" these intruders. Interestingly, the Greek word for "resist" is "antihistomi," from which we get our modern day medical term. The word means "to set again, to withstand." Through submitting to God and his authority, we as Christians have the authority "to withstand" the destructive and the debilitating ideas, suggestions, and imaginations of the devil.

The devil is unequalled in his quickness to infiltrate our minds and hearts with a thought of envy and hatred; with unnecessary fears; with pride and self conceit, etc. "Stand against" these viruses before they spread through your mind and then to other people's minds and eventually consume a family; a business; a church; and even a community. Remember, no superficial remedy will help!

When these evil intruders of our faith are present, apply James' prescription to your spiritual life — "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Take a spiritual antihistamine for every encounter with the evil one.

But we must remember this spiritual authority is only ours "in Christ" and as we submit to his Lordship. Satan can only be under our feet as we are bowing and obeying a risen Saviour. It is Jesus Christ who has set us free from sin and Satan's jurisdiction. Our being "in Christ" sets us free from Satan's rule. So in the face of Satan's tools to destroy our Christian victory and witness, we can shout "Hallelujah." His reign is no longer applicable to our lives and we must "resist him" to let him (Satan) know that. And as we do, he and his cohorts will depart. Amen!

## Reception will honor Martin on 50th year in the ministry

A reception honoring Robert W. Martin, of Rayville, La., on the occasion of his 50th year as an ordained minister, will be held at First Baptist Church, Rayville, La., on June 24, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.



Martin

Martin was born in Rome, Miss., and grew up in Clinton, Miss. He was ordained by the Clinton Baptist Church. He received his B.A. degree from Mississippi College and the Th.M. degree from Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

He has served in eight churches as interim pastor and fourteen churches as pastor during these fifty years. Among the churches served in Mississippi are Ogden Church (Yazoo); Silver City; Phillip; Rosedale; Crestwood (Hinds); First, Ripley; and First, Batesville. He has also served the North Hill Church, Pensacola, Fla., and First, Archibald, La., where he retired from the active pastorate in 1978. He then served as associate pastor of First, Rayville, La., for four years.

Martin has served as a member of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and its Executive Committee, the Christian Action Commission,

and as recording secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention for five years.

He has also served as a teacher and dean for the Mississippi Baptist Seminary and as a member of the Radio and Television Committee of the Florida Baptist Convention.

## Drew youths present drama in Kentucky

The youth of Drew Church left recently on a two week trip, which began with a tour of the Sunday School Board in Nashville and a day at Opryland. The group with their chaperones attended Recreation Week at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, Ridgecrest, N.C.

At the close of the conferences the youth boarded the bus for Kentucky, visiting churches and nursing homes in Taylorsville, Elizabethtown, Sebring, and Marion where they presented an original musical-drama, "We Are The Reason." Fifty took part in this experience.

Deborah Thomas is music and youth director. Wilbur B. Webb is pastor.

(Continued from page 2)  
owned cars or so few that the students were largely "campus bound" (even Saturday classes!) on week-ends and, therefore, obliged to attend a church near the campus. With less than a thousand students enrolled at that time and with only one Baptist church in the community, we had an on-campus population on week-ends, and that made possible our having eight Sunday School classes and thirteen college Training Unions. Today, on that same campus, the total enrollment (boarding and commuting) is far more than three times as large with only one-third of the students living on campus. The two-thirds majority of the students commute and attend their home churches. For the on-campus students there on week-ends, there are four Baptist churches in the community and a large number of attractive churches in the nearby city to which the students can go with their new mobility, and the "across the street" church has four Sunday School classes with less than 100 students enrolled.

Since, according to surveys, the overwhelming majority of students choose colleges 100 miles or less from their homes (a recent survey estimates 9 out of 10), a large number of students leave their campuses after Friday classes to get home to Mom's cooking, the washing machines, and the privilege of attending home churches with their families, and some of these students are filling roles of service in their home churches. Perhaps I may be unconsciously biased toward our contemporary Baptist students, but I feel that they are doing as well in church attendance on Sunday morning as are the resident members of the average church are doing. Well over 50% of the resident members of my church are not attending Sunday School!

But, to me, the happiest thought about the church attendance of our students is this: even if there are not as many students in churches in the immediate vicinity of the colleges, the students in BSU/BCM through the splendid, comprehensive, well-balanced programs of the Baptist Student Ministry are doing the work dear to the heart of our churches more than ever in many phases of religious education, Bible study, witnessing, stewardship, mission support and involvement, and compassionate "unto the least of these" ministries in the communities and around the world.

### Happy sharing

To conclude with an inspiring observation which I have made in constant contact with our Southern Baptist campus ministry, I am happy to report these wholesome aspects of our BSU/BCM ministry:

1. Our students are less "pietistic" in their Christian living and much more concerned to live Christianity consistently and compassionately and with relevance to the needs around them.

2. Our active Christian students are less judgmental and more redemptive toward wrongdoers, less condemnatory of the erring ones and with a compassionate desire to help, disliking sin as much as ever but

loving the sinner in a Christ-like redemptive love.

3. Our BSU/BCM students are not less sensitive to social issues than were their predecessors of the 1950's, who often were vocal and demonstrative in advocating a few issues: rather, today's committed Baptist students are concerned with a broader concern for all issues which touch the lives and needs of people; and while not being as vocal and demonstrative, work out those concerns in compassionate service.

4. A higher percentage of committed Christian students than ever are willing to go into low-compensatory careers if through those careers they can make a significant contribution to alleviating or solving human needs.

### Names in the News

Danny Lanier, former pastor of Memorial Church, Bogalusa, La., has entered full-time evangelism. He



Lanier

attended Clarke College and Miss. College. He has been pastor of churches in Mississippi and Louisiana. Lanier will be serving as associate pastor and staff evangelist at Northcrest Church, Meridian. Malcolm Lewis is pastor. Lanier will be available for revivals, retreats and Bible conferences. He can be contacted by calling 601-986-8834 or 482-3498, or at P. O. Box 3159, Meridian, Miss. 39303.

Walter F. Wilson Sr. was ordained to the gospel ministry by Handsboro Church, Gulfport. Wilson and his wife have been members at Handsboro for a number of years. He has served as deacon and Sunday School teacher. He is currently moderator for the Gulf Coast Association. Martha has served as librarian at Handsboro for several years. The Wilsons have two children, Diane Moran and Walter F. Wilson Jr., a campus minister in Tennessee. Wilson has accepted a call to serve as pastor at Calvary Church, Gulfport.

Ronald and Sue Ballard, missionaries to Paraguay, have arrived in the States (address: 100 Georgia Ave., Hattiesburg, Miss. 39401).

Carterville Church, Petal, will honor Leland and Dona Ruth Hogan for his 15 years as pastor, Sunday, June 24. The church will hold a community-wide reception at 4:30 p.m. in the church activities building.

A Mississippi native, Hogan came to the Petal church from the pastorate of Beulah Church, Hammond, La., in June of 1969.

Calvary Church, Braxton, Simpson County, will ordain four new deacons on June 24. They are Freddie Dixon, Clifton Sheppard, Pete Simon, and Jeff Herrin. Vance Dyess, former pastor, will preach the ordination sermon. Henry J. Bennett is the pastor.

### Therefore . . .

Our BSU/BCM ministry will be quick to admit that it is not all it wants to be as Southern Baptists' outreach to the campus and not all it is striving to become, but it is the best denominational outreach to our campuses now being done by any of our nation's main-line denominations. Therefore, let us rejoice in its ministry, pray for it faithfully, and thank our Heavenly Father that this vital ministry is alive, well, and growing!

Chester E. Swor, who is engaged in a ministry of speaking to young people, lives at 902 Whitworth Street in Jackson.

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Lloyd Elder is president of The Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tennessee.

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BROADMAN



# Conventioneers victims of arson, robbery

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Arson was the suspected cause of a Saturday hotel fire here that gutted the room of four Southern Baptist Convention news room personnel, police said Sunday.

An arson investigator for the Kansas City police department questioned the four, all women, following the late afternoon blaze that apparently started on a bed in the 15th-floor room of the Americana Hotel, at Wyandotte and 13th Streets, one block from Bartle Convention Center.

No series injuries were reported, although a private security guard and a Kansas City policeman suffered from minor smoke inhalation, fire department spokesman Joseph D. Galetti, said.

Each of the women—Faye Byrnes and her daughter, Serena Wilkinson, both of the Nashville, Tenn., area, Gaye Eichler of Dallas, and Vern Myers of Fort Worth—denied emphatically leaving anything on the bed that could have started the blaze. None of them was in the room when the fire broke out at about 4:15 p.m.

Galetti said all 350 guests in the 500-room facility were safely evacuated without incident. He said 11 fire companies responded to the first alarm at 4:24 p.m. and that the first firemen on the 15th floor found one of the beds in Room 1520 ablaze. But the fire was confined to that room, he added, with limited smoke damage to other rooms on the floor.

Arson was suspected, police explained, because about \$400 cash and other personal effects were missing from charred purses and pocketbooks found in the debris. As of midday Sunday, hotel officials had not allowed the women to inspect the

room and were described by the victims as "generally uncooperative."

Red Cross personnel provided immediate assistance, however, including a cash voucher for each of the women to buy clothing.

Two other 15th floor guests, veteran Southern Baptist foreign missionaries Mississippians Charles and Indy Whitten, of Equatorial Guinea, escaped by crawling along the corridor through smoke so thick "we couldn't see a thing." They were napping when the first fire alarm sounded and turned on the television set, thinking the alarm was for a tornado. (The Kansas City area was the site of intense storms and the city was under a tornado watch the afternoon and evening of the fire.)

After opening their door and seeing no smoke, Whitten went back into the room and called the hotel operator, who advised him to leave immediately and use the stairway. When he opened the door the second time, he said, the hall was filled with smoke. They crawled to one end of the hall and could not find the stairway, Whitten said. They then returned to their room, where the operator told them a second time to leave. This time, after crawling to the other end of the hall, they found the exit door and walked safely down 15 flights of stairs to safety.

The Whittens' escape was complicated by the fact that Mrs. Whitten's right leg is in an ankle cast, the result of a broken foot. In the frantic moments before they reached safety and fresh air at the 15th-floor stairway, she said her thought was, "I really hate about not going to Guinea." After spending 36 years in Argentina and Spain, the Whittens are scheduled to depart shortly for Equatorial Guinea.

## Wheeler speaks at Seminary

Edward L. Wheeler, dean of the Morehouse School of Religion, gave the sermon at the 41st commencement of the Mississippi Baptist Seminary. Speaking on the theme "A Person, a Commission, a Message," Wheeler told the 77 graduates that they will face three crucial challenges in their Christian vocations: "1) The challenge to the growing belief that humanity is not worth much when compared to technology, which has developed so rapidly; 2) The challenge that stems from a lack of purpose and the failure to recognize a calling from God; and, 3) The challenge of communication."

To successfully meet these challenges Wheeler said that we must constantly remind ourselves and others that humankind is important because God loves each person, and knows us individually by name; that God still commissions people to be his representatives—when we "take the name 'Christian' it means that we have been commissioned by Jesus Christ"; and as Christians we must communicate to others God's plan of salvation (bring the good news).

The seminary awarded the following at the commencement: doctor of ministry—1; master of theological studies—3; bachelor of theology—12; bachelor of religious education—4; certificate in Christian education—26; certificate in biblical studies—29; certificate in busy pastor training—1; and diploma in Christian training—1.

Of the 77 graduates, five attended the main campus in Jackson. The remaining 72 graduates received their education through the extension system of the seminary. There are 24 seminary extensions located throughout the state.

The Mississippi Baptist Seminary is a cooperative joint venture of national and southern Baptists. It is owned and operated by trustees elected by these two denominations in Mississippi.

Richard Brogan is president of the seminary and Hickman Johnson is dean of academic affairs.

## Pray for MKs

July 2 — Deborah E. Harbin, University of Southern Mississippi (Brazil).

July 3 — Mary Trott, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky. (Brazil).

## Softball tournament

Seventh annual Baptist high school boys state slow pitch tournament, Van Winkle Church, Jackson, July 13-14. Entries due by July 6. Call 922-3513 for information.

## Homecomings

Palestine Church, Route 1, Harrisville: June 24; speaker, Carl Burns, pastor; lunch at the church; afternoon singing; all offerings to the cemetery fund.

# Messengers elect Stanley

(Continued from page 3)

The resolution included statements including "The Scriptures attest to God's delegated authority (God the head of Christ, Christ the head of man, man the head of women, man and woman dependent one upon the other to the glory of God) distinguishing the roles of men and women in public prayer and prophecy (I Cor. 11:2-5); . . . and that "While Paul commends women and men alike in other roles of ministry and service (Titus 2:1-10), he excludes women from pastoral leadership (I Tim. 2:12) to preserve a submission God requires because the man was first in creation and the woman was first in the Edenic fall (I Tim. 2:13ff); . . ."

Wayne Dehoney, pastor of Walnut Street Church, Louisville, Ky., told messengers he believed the resolution was unconstitutional because of "Article IV. Authority: While independent and sovereign in its own sphere, the Convention does not claim and will never attempt to exercise any authority over any other Baptist body, whether church, auxiliary organizations, associations, or convention." Dehoney said the resolution subject matter was an "affair of the local church entirely."

President Draper ruled Dehoney's point of order was not proper and noted that a hand vote sustained his ruling.

A motion to extend the time for discussion another 10 minutes failed and the resolution went to the ballot. Messengers voted 4,793 for the resolution and 3,466 against.

Other resolutions passed in Kansas City included favoring equal access legislation, favoring raising the minimum drinking age to 21; opposing all abortions except to save the

life of the mother; opposing cigarette smoking; and opposing secular humanism. The last resolution encouraged "the restoration of theistic principles in the curriculum" of all schools.

One other matter which was heralded by much pre-convention discussion was the report of the Committee on Boards. It included nomination of Paul Pressler of Texas to the Executive Committee, to replace Welton Gaddy, who moved. Pressler is a Houston judge who is considered one of the principal figures in a group that has as a stated aim to dominate boards and agencies and SBC leadership positions. A number of recent SBC presidents including Charles Stanley, Adrian Rogers, Bailey Smith, and Jimmy Draper were supported by this faction.

Bruce McIver, pastor of Wilshire Church, Dallas, was nominated to replace Pressler as the nominee for the Executive Committee. A ballot approved Pressler's nomination 53-47 percent. A few other challenges to the committee report also lost, and the full report was passed.

One challenge to the choice of Las Vegas as SBC site in 1989 was also thrown out because guidelines not allow decisions to be rescinded when contracts are involved. Contracts have been agreed to already relative to the 1989 convention. Some disapprove of Las Vegas as a convention site because of the gambling that goes on there.

Sixty-six nationals and missionaries were certified to teach and conduct conferences in a MasterLife workshop in Venezuela, the first such nationwide effort in a Spanish-speaking area.

## Revival Dates

Valley Hill, Carroll: June 25-July 1; Sun. 7 p.m.; Mon.-Sat., 7:30 p.m.; evangelist George Jones of Braton Chapel Church, Turrell, Ark.; music leader Joe Styron, Vaiden Church, Vaiden.

Pulaski (Scott): June 24-29; John Sharp, pastor of Sebastopol Church, preaching; Kendall Winstead, Springfield, leading the music; services at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on Sunday; week nights at 7:30; Bob Smith, pastor.

Salem Church (Leake) on Highway 25: beginning Sunday morning, June 24, services nightly at 7:30; W. Lavon Moore, director of missions in Attala County, evangelist; H. C. Adams, pastor.

Goss Church, Columbia: June 24-27; regular services on Sunday; weekday services at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; George G. Aultman, evangelist; Leon Dunn, music evangelist; Matt Buckles, pastor.

Spring Hill (Marshall): June 24-29; at 6 p.m. Sunday and 7 p.m. daily; Ray Grissett, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Jackson, evangelist; Gene Winkler, minister of music, First, Holly Springs, leading the music; Billy Mitchell, pastor.

Southside Church, Winona: June 24-29; Jimmy Grubbs of Memphis, evangelist; music under direction of church leader; Mon.-Fri. at 7:30 p.m.; H. B. Vinson, pastor.

Pine Level Church, Leakesville: June 25-29, two former pastors to lead the services; C. Paul Jones, pastor, Piney Grove Church, Fuquay-Varina, N.C., evangelist; James Miller, minister of music, East Moss Point Church, music evangelist; David MacIsaac, pastor; services 7 nightly.

Our humanity were a poor thing but for the divinity that stirs within us.—Francis Bacon

## MIRACLE SUNDAY TWENTY-FIVE

June 24, 1984

### PREACHING



Dr. William G. Tanner  
President  
Home Mission Board, S.B.C.

Woodville Heights Baptist Church  
1109 Cooper Road  
Jackson, Mississippi



### SINGING



Clint & Jarvis Rose Nichols  
New Orleans Baptist  
Theological Seminary

THE MORNING CELEBRATION  
Sunday School . . . . . 9:15 A.M.  
Miracle Goal . . . . . 8:50  
Morning Worship . . . . . 10:30 A.M.  
Lunch . . . . . 12:00 noon

THE EVENING CELEBRATION  
Church Training . . . . . 8:00 P.M.  
Miracle Goal . . . . . 3:25  
Evening Worship . . . . . 7:00 P.M.  
Concert . . . . . Clint & Jarvis Rose Nichols

### SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE DAY

- Sunday School & Church Training Classes led by pastor for former members and guests.
- Historical panorama of the life and ministry of Woodville Heights Baptist Church from the beginning.
- Preacher for the morning service will be Dr. William G. Tanner, President of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.
- Music Artist for the day will be Clint and Jarvis Rose Nichols from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The evening service will feature the Nichols in Concert.
- Special gifts from the Church to help you remember the day as a Christ honoring day.
- A wonderful opportunity to see old friends in Christ.



# Stanley states views on some issues

By Tim Nicholas

Charles Stanley, in his first presidential press conference following election as Southern Baptist Convention president, acknowledged his church's mission giving record, quoted the Apostle Paul concerning women's ordination, and denied he was elected by any particular group.

Stanley, pastor of Atlanta's First Baptist Church, and outgoing president of the SBC Pastors' Conference, was asked if he were a part of the conservative political faction operating within the convention. "I would see myself as being elected by the whole convention," Stanley had said. He did agree that he had been in a meeting that morning that included Paul Pressler, Paige Patterson, Bailey Smith, Adrian Rogers, Russell Kaemmerling, and Jim DeLoach (associate pastor of Second Church, Houston). These are many of the leaders of a group with the stated aim of placing fundamentalists in positions of leadership in the convention.

## Giving record

Stanley noted that the \$640,000 his church gave to missions causes last year included about \$66,000 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions, between \$14-15,000 for the Annie Armstrong Offering for Home Missions, and gifts to local Baptist Student Unions and to missionaries "besides those who are Southern Baptist," he said. He said that the church gave 2.1 percent of its budget to the Cooperative Program. He said he has plans "in my mind" for a theological night school for laymen at his church.

Asked about his views of women's ordination, he quoted the Apostle Paul, saying "women should not usurp the authority of men in church." He added that he does not believe women should be ordained. Asked if he would want to censure local churches which ordained women or agencies which employ ordained women, Stanley said that local churches are autonomous bodies. He said that before censuring agencies he would need to "think long and hard" about the matter.

In the area of memberships, Stanley said he is in the Moral Majority organization, but had asked his name be removed from its board of directors because of inactivity of the board. He is a member of Roundtable, the National Association of Religious Broadcasters, and he confirmed that he no longer is affiliated with Amway, the home products company, nor is his wife connected. He said that he sold Amway for about two years beginning in 1975 giving it one night a week, but dropped out. Commenting on rumors concerning his Amway work, "I wish I'd made as much as people think I made."

Stanley, who preaches on three cable networks, CBN, PTL, and Trinity, said he also is on about 150 radio stations and his church sends out about 40,000 tapes a month with his "In Touch" programming.

Asked why he has not been involved in Southern Baptist life on the associational or state level, he noted that in 1970 when he became pastor, about 300 people left the church. He

said he was left pretty much without a staff and had to spend his time "building that fellowship." He added, "I plan to become more involved."

Stanley said that he is "committed to biblical authority" and that he believes the Bible is "without error." He said concerning opposition to the Baptist Joint Committee's opposition to the Reagan Prayer Amendment that "I would have voted for prayer in the schools."

Concerning his aims as president of the SBC, he said he had not had time to set goals. But he said that for appointments to key committees, he will "go to a number of wise counsels on all sides."

He said that when he became pastor of First Church, Atlanta, that detractors said he would be out of the SBC in 90 days. "14 years later, I'm still here," he said. The Southwestern Seminary graduate noted that he was not born a Southern Baptist, but became one out of conviction.

Stanley said that he will not be available to the Baptist media for interviews during his presidency, that if anyone has questions, submit them to Dan Martin of Baptist Press who will forward them to Stanley. Secular writers will be able to talk to a staffer Stanley is adding.

Stanley is 51 years old. He and his wife, Anna Margaret, have a son, Andy, a student at Dallas Theological Seminary, an independent school, and a daughter, Becky, 23, a journalism graduate, as was Andy.

## Balinese buy land

DENPASAR, Indonesia — Although land in Denpasar on the Indonesian island of Bali is extremely expensive, Grace Baptist Church recently purchased property for a church building. Southern Baptist missionary Harry Bush from Tampa, Fla., called it "one of the most spectacular victories recently."

## Lottie gifts fall short

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Final receipts for the 1983 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions fell nearly \$2 million short of the \$60 million goal. When the books closed May 31 the total was \$58,025,336.79, or 96.7 percent of the goal.

But Southern Baptists topped their 1982 offering receipts by nearly \$4 million, with the 1983 offering running 7.3 percent ahead of the previous year and well ahead of the 5.5 percent national inflation rate.

The 1983 offering goal was lowered last summer after the previous year's receipts fell \$4 million short of the goal. It was originally set for \$66 million.

The 1984 offering goal is \$66 million. All of it will be budgeted, because the money is needed and board officials are convinced Southern Baptists can reach the goal. Meeting it will require a 13.74 percent increase.



Charles Stanley speaks to press conference after election as SBC President.

## Northwest recognizes director of missions

Northwest Baptist Association on May 26 honored Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Brown with a recognition and appreciation service. The association's Appreciation Committee presented a special "This Is Your Life, Ervin Brown," at the Northwest Junior College Coliseum, Senatobia.

Also a 1984 Buick LeSabre Limited was presented to the Browns as a gift from churches and friends in the association. Brown has been director of missions for Northwest Association (Tate and DeSoto counties) for 22 years. Also he is first vice president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Out-of-town guests were present for the slide presentation.

Earl Kelly, executive secretary, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, spoke. "The Joyful Sounds," a group of women from Mount Zion Church, sang. One song they presented had been written especially for the occasion, in recognition of Brown.

Ervin Brown moved to DeSoto Association in 1954, as pastor of Eudora Church. While there, he assisted in getting an associational missions

program going, with James Redding as the first director of missions, beginning in July 1957. Brown then served as the first pastor of First Church, Nesbit, 1959-1962, when he was called as director of missions, DeSoto Association.

When the associational missions program began, there were only 14 churches; he has seen 18 new churches start since that time. He has served as the beginning mission pastor of 12 of these.

He later served as foster missionary in Tate Association for several years. In 1980, the Tate Association and the DeSoto Association merged into one, Northwest Baptist Association. There is now a total of 50 churches. He has seen a lot of growth in this area as Memphis has spilled over.

Brown has led in the building of an associational office building, and in developing an associational training center. This is a 113-acre site with a 14-acre lake that is providing a camping and retreat center for the churches. In 1983, the association voted to name it "Ervin Brown Training Center."



TWO MEMBERS of the Appreciation Committee, Northwest Baptist Association, Armond D. Taylor, left, pastor of Summerwood Church, and J. B. Rose, right, pastor of First Church, Southaven, present to Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Brown the keys to a 1984 Buick LeSabre Limited. Brown is director of missions, Northwest Association.

## Staff Changes

James M. Moore has accepted a call as interim pastor of Glendale Church (Alcorn Association).

Mike Smithey is the new pastor of West Marks Church at Marks. He and his wife, Laurie, and two children have moved there from Chewalla, Tenn.

Perry County Association recently welcomed three new pastors. Doyle Sellers has accepted a call to Calvary Church. Joe Hart is serving at Buck Creek Church. Malcolm Wages has assumed the pastorate at Seminary Church.

James Steel is joining the staff at First Church-Jackson, as organist/music assistant. He is a native



of Texas and a graduate of Hardin-Simmon University. In December of 1983 he was graduated with distinction from Southwestern Seminary where he received a master's degree in music, with a major in organ performance. Following his graduation the seminary asked him to stay and teach for a term. For 2 1/2 years, he has served First Church, Waxahatchie, Tex.

Summerland Church, Jones Association, has called J. Steven Mooneyham as pastor. He goes from the pastorate of Centerville Church, Waltham Association. He and his family moved onto the field May 28. He is a recent graduate of New Orleans Seminary, having earned the master of divinity degree.

Walter F. Wilson, Sr. has accepted the call to serve as pastor of Calvary Church, Gulfport. Wilson goes



from Handsboro Church where he has served as deacon and Sunday School teacher. He was recently ordained by the Handsboro Church. He is moderator of the Gulf Coast Association.

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# Anti-abortion, anti-pornography mingle with words of encouragement

KANSAS CITY—Admonitions to take stronger stands against abortion and pornography mingled with words of personal encouragement at the two-day Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference here.

Crowds estimated at more than 12,000 applauded 11 preachers and inspirational speakers during four sessions of the annual pastors' gathering.

A strongly conservative theme dominated many of the messages, and the pastors elected as their new president. O. S. Hawkins, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., pastor described by former president Adrian Rogers who nominated him as "straight as an arrow theologically."

Along with advice on how to be more loving parents, better stewards of their money and more effective proclaimers of the gospel, pastors got tips on how to deal with stress and how to cope with the temptation to quit when the going gets rough.

The anti-abortion thrust was spearheaded by a Presbyterian filmmaker, Franky Schaeffer of Los Altos, Calif., who received standing applause after urging Southern Baptists to lead out in the fight against abortion and to "defend your theology." Zig Ziglar, a motivation specialist from Dallas, later elected SBC first vice president, urged Southern Baptists to consider boycotting convenience stores that sell pornographic magazines.

The notes of encouragement were sounded throughout the meeting.

Bailey Smith, pastor of Del City (Okla.) First Baptist Church and a former president of both the Pastors' Conference and the Southern Baptist Convention, said that never in his lifetime had he seen the devil attacking pastors as he is doing today.

Many are discouraged and considering quitting their ministry, he noted, and some have fallen victim to the devil's temptations. The role of the pastor is too glorious to lose for a moment of sensual pleasure, Smith said.

He said pastors can take heart in that they are commissioned by the greatest authority (God); stirred by the greatest event, the cross of Jesus Christ; strengthened by the greatest power, the Holy Spirit; and motivated by the greatest emotion, the love of Jesus.

Another speaker, Stephen F. Olford, of Encounter Ministries, Wheaton, Ill., shared an open prayer that God would "make us servant preachers."

Ed Young, pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church whose name has circulated for months as a possible SBC presidential candidate, challenged the pastors to ask themselves how they are doing as persons, as partners (in their marriage) and as parents.

Other advice also was prevalent. Roy Fish of Fort Worth called on pastors to set the example in personal evangelism and to make evangelism their first priority. Fish, a Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of evangelism, warned that "you can't look through

the eyes of Jesus and look at evangelism with disdain."

Ron Lewis, of Church Growth Design, Nashville, said recent surveys show nearly 90 percent of Southern Baptist laypeople fail to list "winning the world to Jesus Christ" as the church's first priority.

But the preachers were also cautioned that pastors are mostly "Type A" personalities especially prone to stress.

Charles Lowery, minister of counseling at Dallas' First Baptist Church, said: "A Type A person does sometimes stop and smell the roses, but if they smell good he'll try to sell them on Mother's Day to raise money for the building program."

Throughout the conference, spirited singing filled the hangar-like Kansas City convention hall with such songs as "Victory in Jesus" and "Give Me That Old Time Religion," along with stirring music by the 200-plus voice choir from Atlanta's First Baptist Church. Charles Stanley, the president of the 1984 conference, brought along not only his choir but also the church's orchestra and special soloists.

Crowds varied in size from 8,000 on Monday morning to what Secretary-Treasurer Fred Powell of Excelsior Springs, Mo., estimated as "12,000 to 13,000" at the concluding session Monday evening.

He estimated 10,000 were on hand Monday afternoon at the same time a nearby meeting of the "SBC Forum" attracted 2,000.

In addition to Hawkins, the pastors elected Robert Tenery, pastor of Burkemont Baptist Church, Morgantown, N.C., as vice president, and had to divide the secretary-treasurer job because it couldn't get a conclusive vote between the two nominees.

Calvin Miller, pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Omaha, Neb., was named secretary, and Tom Melzoni Sr., pastor of Miami Shores Baptist Church, Dayton, Ohio, was designated treasurer.

Hawkins was nominated by Adrian Rogers of Memphis, Tenn., former president of the Southern Baptist Convention. A graduate of Southwestern Seminary and Texas Christian University, Hawkins has led his church to be one of the top 10 in the SBC in baptisms, Rogers said.

Hawkins won easily over D. L. Lowery, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, in a show-of-hands vote.

An estimated 10,000 attending the afternoon session also elected another conservative, Robert Tenery, pastor of Burkemont Baptist Church, Morgantown, N.C., as vice president. He also won handily over T. T. Crabtree, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo.

But when it came to choosing a secretary-treasurer, the pastors dead-locked on the two nominees, Tom Melzoni, Sr., pastor of Miami Shores Baptist Church, Dayton, Ohio, and Calvin Miller, pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Omaha, Neb.

After even a standing vote couldn't show a difference, President Charles



Pastors' Conference officers

Preachers from four states were elected as officers by the 1984 Pastors' Conference, from left: Robert Tenery, Morgantown, N. C., vice-president; O. S. Hawkins, Fort

Lauderdale, Fla., president; Calvin Miller, Omaha, Neb., secretary; and Tom Melzoni Sr., Dayton, Ohio, treasurer.—(David Haywood photo)

Stanley of Atlanta suggested the group split the office, and this was approved. Miller, author of 19 books, was named secretary, and Melzoni, a pioneer church pastor and church-starter in Ohio, was named treasurer.

Tenery, editor of the conservative Baptist United News and a trustee of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, was nominated by former SBC president Bailey Smith of Del City, Okla. Smith said Tenery's church has increased its Cooperative Program giving 600 percent, with a 63 percent increase in the past year.

Schaeffer, son of the late best-selling Christian author Francis A. Schaeffer, pulled few punches as he addressed the Pastors' Conference.

He ranged from theological inerrancy to religious freedom in the classrooms but he saved his strongest oratory to challenge Southern Baptists to take a strong stand against abortion and for a return to conservative moral values on all fronts.

"Do you not understand that the left has been and always will be the enemy of the Gospel?" he asked.

He urged Southern Baptists to put their full force behind a return to a Judeo-Christian position.

"Are we Christians?" he asked. "Are we purists? Are we the salt of the earth? Will this world be very different when we leave it from the way we found it? Are we preserving Christian ideals and thinking throughout this country?"

Ziglar criticized the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Christian Life Commission for actions of staff members of both agencies.

In contrast, two other speakers at the final session of the pre-convention pastors' conference en-

couraged the ministers to develop stronger family life and seek "inner healing."

Ziglar also leveled his artillery on the Christian Life Commission on grounds that a staff member at the Nashville-based agency allegedly said abortion is sometimes "the lesser of evils" in problem pregnancies. Anyone who knows the Bible knows abortion is murder, he declared.

In other remarks, Ziglar condemned pornography and urged a Southern Baptist boycott of the 7-Eleven convenience store chain which, he said, is the nation's largest seller of pornographic materials. He also asked Baptists to join the National Federation of Decency, based in Tupelo, Miss.

But two other speakers, including

prominent Houston pastor Ed Young, a Mississippi native, offered positive advice on pastors' family life and psychological health.

The pastor of Second Baptist Church, Houston, urged ministers to accept themselves as objects of God's forgiveness, to learn how their mates are different from themselves, and to listen to and find time for their children at a young age.

Concluding conference speaker David Seamands, pastor of the Wilmore United Methodist Church, Wilmore, Ky., told the pastors they must conquer "three great Ms" if they are to reach their potential as Christians and as ministers. He identified these as childhood mottos, moral mistakes and destructive memories.

## Attala sponsors revival crusade

Attala County Association is sponsoring a revival crusade, to be held July 15-20 at the Kosciusko High School Football Stadium. Jack Stanton will be the evangelist.

Jamall Badry will direct the music. Services will be held each evening at 7:45. Levon Moore is the Attala County director of missions.

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## Family rebellion

By Robert Earl Shirley, pastor, Parkway, Tupelo  
II Samuel 15:2-12

Surely few things can be more heartbreaking than to see children who are raised in a godly home, depart from that home's example and prove to be a disappointment to both God and their parents. Such had been the case of Samuel, and such was to occur in David's home as his son, Absalom, rebelled against him. He must have been reminded of his own sin in having Uriah killed in order to have his wife, Bathsheba, as he saw the situation develop.

When David's eldest son, Amnon, was guilty of incest with Tamar, his half sister, Tamar's brother, Absalom, had him killed. There was resentment on Absalom's part due to his father's refusal to mete out the punishment himself, and the feeling continued as David refused to see his son for a period of years. At long last, when Absalom insisted on an audience with the king even if it cost him his life, the breach appeared to be healed, and he was restored to his former place in the court. All was not as peaceful as it seemed, however, for he now determined that he would replace David as the king.

**Absalom lays the foundation (15:2-6).** Absalom showed his true colors as he set in motion a plan to place himself on the throne by turning the hearts of the people toward himself. Pretending a sympathetic spirit that was not real toward those who came to the king for help, he met them personally as they entered the city, listened to their problems, and

led them to believe that there was no one designated in David's court to help them. Then with the same false concern, he bemoaned the fact that he was not in a position himself to offer them the help that they were seeking. Apparently he was a good actor and politician, for little by little he succeeded in winning their backing and loyalties and turned them against his father.

**Absalom takes overt action (15:7-12).** After a period of time, Absalom seems to have felt that his position was secured enough for him to bring his plans to fulfillment. Consequently, he requested permission from the king to allow him to go to Hebron to fulfill a vow that he had presumably made at some time in the past. The fictitious vow, claimed to have been made while he was living in Geshur in Syria, was that if God would let him return once again to Jerusalem, Absalom would offer a sacrifice there.

Seemingly accepting the story as true, David gave permission for him to go. The city of Hebron was possibly chosen with the idea that there would be much opposition to David there due to his moving the capital away to Jerusalem. Spies, or messengers, were sent out to each of the tribes to determine their feelings toward Absalom's attempt to seize the throne. Obviously, they were to press his claims only in those places where the support of the tribes was assured.

His underhanded measures and the

care with which he worked out the details is indicated by the fact that two hundred of those men from Jerusalem who went with him to pay his vow were innocent of any involvement and had no idea that any treachery was involved.

The plan was, at the sound of the trumpets, to have himself proclaimed king by acclamation. Even Ahithophel, David's counselor and Bathsheba's grandfather, was influenced by his long standing grievances against the king and became a part of the conspiracy. The campaign was so well planned and so skillfully executed that opposition to David continued to grow and his position on the throne was imperiled.

As a seasoned veteran, David realized that his best course now was to flee from the city and fight at a more advantageous time. Consequently, Absalom's plans to enter Jerusalem and take over the nation's rule failed, as he found the king gone. Accepting the advice of Hushai, to use caution, he gave David time to rally his forces and prepare for an attack, and in the ensuing battle, Absalom's hair caught in the branches of a tree, rendering him helpless.

Because David had commanded that he not be harmed, his soldiers refused to slay him until Joab stabbed him in the heart. Some of the saddest words in our Bible are those of David weeping over his rebellious child. Rebellion had not killed the love of the father for his son.

## People have priority

By Gerald Buckley, pastor, Parkway, Natchez  
Luke 5:12-14; 29-30

A minister in South Carolina was to officiate at a big church wedding. The rehearsal went smoothly. The flower girl, age four, was obviously going to steal the show. She was cute, and she was so prim and proper. This little flower girl did everything perfectly at the rehearsal. The next night at the wedding, the little flower girl failed to come down the aisle at the appointed time. The organist continued to play, but the flower girl failed to appear. After the wedding was over, the little girl looked up at her daddy and said—"But, daddy, there were people out there." During the rehearsal there were no people in the pews. People in the pews the night of the wedding made all the difference for the little flower girl.

Indeed, there are people out there. Jesus cared for people. They were so much more important to him than rules or regulations or traditions. In this lesson we will discover the concern Jesus had for people.

### I. Jesus touches a leper (Luke 5:12-14)

Jesus had great compassion for people. He seemed always to take time to minister to them, as he did to this leper. Lepers were regarded as outcasts; they were not allowed to live inside the villages. Nor were they allowed to participate in the normal life of society. Many people believed leprosy was a sign or symbol of sin. Not only were lepers thought to be unclean, but anyone who touched a leper was ceremonially defiled. Such a person was required to separate himself from society until he could be ritually cleansed.

Leprosy was a word used to describe a variety of ulcerous skin diseases. The illness was physically disfiguring and could be fatal. Luke's terminology indicates that the man who came to Jesus had an advanced case of this dreaded skin disease. This sick man pleaded with Jesus for help, and he indicated that he believed that Jesus could heal him if he would.

Can you imagine what this man thought when Jesus reached out his hand and touched him? Separated from everyone but other lepers, including isolation from family members and friends, this man had not been touched by a non-leperous person for years. The touch itself spoke volumes about Jesus' compassion.

Of course, to touch a leper was to break the ceremonial law. Contact with ritual uncleanness made one unclean. However, the regulation did not stop Jesus for one moment. This pathetic person in need had much greater priority than a ceremonial law. The touch of one who cared had almost as much impact as the healing that followed the touch.

There is a tremendous truth here. Jesus touched the untouchable. His hand went out to the man from whom everyone else would have shrunk away. It is the very essence of Christianity to touch the untouchable, to love the unlovable, to forgive the unforgivable. Jesus did so—and so must we.

### II. Jesus associates with sinners (Luke 5:29-30)

Jesus received criticism because of his association with known sinners and people designated as ritually unclean. Illustrative of his identification with such people was Jesus' contact with tax collectors.

Tax collectors were liked by virtually no one. Some of them practiced extortion. Naturally, their overtaxation produced resentment among people, which in turn provoked more unjust taxation. They were banned from the synagogues and treated as dregs of society.

Jesus called a tax collector to be one of his disciples and then attended a dinner party at this man's house. No doubt, Levi wanted an opportunity to expose his friends to his newfound Savior. Thus, Jesus shared a meal with many individuals considered morally repugnant by the religious establishment. Pharisees, for example, refused even to have any social contact with sinners. To eat with a person was to extend friendship and to communicate acceptance. The Pharisees would never be caught reclining at a table with the kinds of persons who surrounded Jesus.

Through the years, from time to time, the church has been criticized for admitting "riffraff" into its membership. Yet, these are the very people with whom Jesus identified most intimately. Jesus met with tax collectors and sinners and raised the quality of the group. Thankfully, the Lord's moral uprightness did not produce a self-righteousness that ignored persons with moral problems.

Unfortunately, on some occasions, the church has condemned rather than loved, turned away rather than accepted, the very kinds of persons most in need of Christian love and ministry. The fellowship of Christ's people is open, not closed, to individuals who have sinned, failed, made mistakes, and experienced problems. Faithfulness to the example of Christ requires seeking out such persons with help rather than waiting for them to come requesting help. People have priority over moral biases.

## Bible Book

## Jonah's missionary lesson

By Bill Causey, pastor, Parkway, Jackson  
Jonah 3:1-4:11

Jonah, having attempted to escape the responsibilities to which God called him, finds that God could track him down, bring him back, teach the lesson of obedience, and give him a new beginning. This time Jonah lets God decide the destination and the message, but Jonah still must learn the most important lesson of all.

### I. An appropriate return 3:1-10

The persistent call of God continued; and Jonah responded, this time in obedience. It is made abundantly clear that the call is of God and the message is from God. The message is to be revealed at the proper time (1-2). Jonah is found going (God's way) to Nineveh, a city so large it would take three days to preach to all of it (3). In the first day he preached that Nineveh was doomed and would be overthrown in 40 days (4).

They believed in God through the voice of the prophet and responded with repentance deep and genuine. They called a fast and clothed themselves in sackcloth, a rough and unsightly fabric (5). The king led the way (6). His influence extended beyond personal repentance to the issuing of a proclamation calling for total involvement. Not even the animals would continue as usual, but were denied food and water and were

clothed likewise in sackcloth. The voices of people and animals alike are pictured as crying to God. People are called upon to earnestly call on God and to repent of any evil way (7-8). All this upon the supposition that God might forgive them and not punish with destruction (9).

And sure enough, they were right! God does forgive and remove the threatened destruction (10).

### II. A miserable prophet 4:1-5a

Now who looks foolish? It appears that he was mistaken when nothing happened, even though he was true to his calling. His prayer (2) reveals Jonah's insights into God's character. It further reveals his earlier motivation in fleeing from the presence of the Lord. The preacher of truth looks as though he lied and the evil city looks not so evil. It is enough to make Jonah want to die (3). God questions whether Jonah is correct in being angry (4). Jonah's response is to remove himself from the city to sit and wait (5a).

### III. An essential lesson 4:5b

At this point Jonah made a shelter for himself and waited to see what would happen to the city (5b). The Lord seemed to assist Jonah with his project as a vine grew over his shelter, creating even greater comfort. Jonah found something to be happy

about in this little turn of events (6). But God was not through teaching Jonah a lesson. The next day the plant withered away (7) as a worm attacked it, the hot wind blew, and Jonah's little shelter proved inadequate as a shield from the sun. Again he wanted to die (8). God again asks (cf. v. 4) if Jonah has good reason to be angry; and the reply is yes, "even unto death" (9).

Now the great lesson: Jonah has great concern about a worthless, short lived plant in which he had made no investment (10). Should not God feel deeply for thousands of human beings? Should not God care for a great city enough to send a messenger to people who have not had a word from God? The 120,000 could mean a total population who do not know right from wrong (right hand from left) or that there were that many not old enough (children) to tell their right hand from their left (11). In either case, the lesson is that Jonah (as we are) is concerned about trivial things, while a world waits for the message from God and missionaries to bring it!

Interestingly, God could appoint a fish (1:17), a plant (4:6), a worm (4:7) and wind (4:8) but has a hard time appointing a man! And is it not a lesson for us today?

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